

Working to make an image: an analysis of three Philip Morris corporate image media campaigns

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Objective: To describe the nature and timing of, and population exposure to, Philip Morris USA's three explicit corporate image television advertising campaigns and explore the motivations behind each campaign.

Methods : Analysis of television ratings from the largest 75 media markets in the United States, which measure the reach and frequency of population exposure to advertising; copies of all televised commercials produced by Philip Morris; and tobacco industry documents, which provide insights into the specific goals of each campaign.

Findings: Household exposure to the "Working to Make a Difference: the People of Philip Morris" averaged 5.37 ads/month for 27 months from 1999–2001; the "Tobacco Settlement" campaign averaged 10.05 ads/month for three months in 2000; and "PMUSA" averaged 3.11 ads/month for the last six months in 2003. The percentage of advertising exposure that was purchased in news programming in order to reach opinion leaders increased over the three campaigns from 20%, 39% and 60%, respectively. These public relations campaigns were designed to counter negative images, increase brand recognition, and improve the financial viability of the company.

Conclusions: Only one early media campaign focused on issues other than tobacco, whereas subsequent campaigns have been specifically concerned with tobacco issues, and more targeted to opinion leaders. The size and timing of the advertising buys appeared to be strategically crafted to maximise advertising exposure for these population subgroups during critical threats to Philip Morris's public image.

After seriously considering and rejecting the option to leave the tobacco business in the early 1990s, previous research has documented how Philip Morris decided to engage in a deliberate strategy of corporate image enhancement, borne out of changes in public policies and public opinion about tobacco regulation, as well as the growing tide of litigation in the United States against tobacco companies.^{1–3} Further, in order to reposition the company as responsible and reasonable, Philip Morris began to develop relationships with organisations that favoured less effective tobacco control measures, such as youth access programmes.⁴ In the late 1990s, several tobacco trials and the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) made public many corporate tobacco company documents that have since subjected Philip Morris to uncomfortable scrutiny about the company's real views on issues such as youth smoking, truth telling about smoking and health, addiction and so on.³ Two major tobacco trials placed additional pressure on the company. In September 1999, the United States Justice Department filed a multibillion dollar suit against the tobacco industry to recover costs for smoking related diseases treated under Federal health programmes.⁵ A month later, a Florida court of appeal had opened the opportunity for a jury to award a lump sum punitive damage for 500 000 sick Florida smokers in the Engle trial. Philip Morris's attorney warned that damages could exceed \$300 billion, destroying the industry.⁶

At the same time that Philip Morris was fielding a vigorous defence to these legal challenges, it launched a public image campaign, airing a series of corporate image advertisements in the United States on network and cable television. The first campaign under the tagline, "Working to make a difference: the people of Philip Morris," began in October 1999 and attempted to humanise Philip Morris by portraying the

company as a good corporate citizen. In the ads, Philip Morris was depicted as helping prevent the sale of cigarettes to minors, as well as providing charitable contributions to a number of community based organisations. In July 2000, three days after the Engle punitive damage verdict, the company broadcast a campaign different in tone and content from its earlier campaign. This ad told the public that "Things are changing" and outlined the improved practices of the company after the MSA. In June 2003, Philip Morris launched another series of ads, under the tagline, "www.philipmorrisusa.com" which directed viewers to the company's website for information on the health effects of smoking, quitting and ways to prevent youth smoking.

The corporate image media campaign represented a major shift in rebranding the company to the public. In 1999, Philip Morris spent a total of \$153 million on corporate advertising, which included the substantial expenditures for the corporate image media campaign, and represented an increase of over 800% from 1998.⁷ The Philip Morris brand presented in the public image television ads was the first positive image of a tobacco company that the public had seen on television in 30 years.⁸ By 2000, the company had more than doubled its corporate advertising to \$316 million.⁹ The significance of the company's image campaign is illustrated by its size relative to paid advertising budgets of Philip Morris's cigarette products: corporate image advertising spending dwarfed the amount that was spent advertising its flagship brand, Marlboro, at just over \$94 million for each year in 1999 and 2000.⁹

Abbreviations: DMA, designated market area; GRPs, gross ratings points; MSA, Master Settlement Agreement; NMR, Nielsen Media Research; PM, Philip Morris; YSP, youth smoking prevention

During the same period, Philip Morris also launched two youth smoking prevention (YSP) campaigns—one targeted at youth (from December 1998) and the other, at parents (from July 1999). Previous research has already provided in-depth descriptions of Philip Morris YSP campaigns and the motivations behind them.^{10–12} Population exposure to televised Philip Morris YSP advertising campaigns matched exposures from US public health sponsored tobacco control campaigns during the period 1999 to 2003.¹³ Furthermore, higher youth exposure to youth directed YSP ads have been associated with stronger youth smoking intentions,^{14 15} whereas greater exposure to parent directed YSP ads was associated among 10th and 12th graders with decreased perceived harm of smoking, stronger smoking intentions and greater likelihood of smoking in the past 30 days.¹⁴ However, there has been little focus in the literature on the three overt corporate image advertising campaigns.

Recent studies have examined Philip Morris's overall strategy to enhance their corporate image,^{1 2 16 17} but to date, there is no published research detailing the extent and reach of the company's corporate image television advertising campaigns and the specific motivations behind each of them. This study traces three of Philip Morris's corporate image advertising campaigns from their beginning in late 1998 to the end of 2003. Using commercial ratings data, this study is the first to quantify the amount of advertising from each campaign to television households across the United States, identify television programme placement patterns and, through corporate documents, explore the specific goals behind each individual campaign.

METHODS

Data sources

Data for this study came from three sources: tobacco industry documents, which provide insights into the specific goals of each advertising campaign; copies of all televised commercials produced by Philip Morris; and television advertising ratings data, which measure the reach and frequency of population exposure to advertising.

Corporate documents

Philip Morris corporate documents were accessed at the Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/>). A snowball search strategy was used to build a larger list of search terms.^{1 18} This type of strategy uses key documents discovered in the search to build a larger list of search terms. The snowball search started with terms such as "PM 21," the name of Philip Morris's corporate image strategy, and the names of campaigns such as "Working to Make a Difference," "Master Settlement Agreement" and "PM USA." The documents found under these terms generated a larger list of search terms, which included names of consultants and advertising agencies, such as Issue & Image Advocacy Advertising, StarCom, The Holm Group and APCO Worldwide. Over 400 documents were identified and reviewed. The search was conducted over a three month period at the end of 2005.

Identification and classification of Philip Morris ads

We used creative title identifiers and digital and VHS tape video to identify and content analyse all Philip Morris television ads.¹⁹ Each ad was carefully reviewed to identify taglines, plot and execution, in order to assign ads to each of the three explicit corporate image campaigns. Taglines appear at the end of commercials and contain information that advertisers would like the television audience to remember.

Exposure to advertising

Television advertising ratings provide information on average audience exposure to commercials. Occurrences, ratings and programming information such as programme type and creative title of all Philip Morris television advertisements appearing on network and cable television across the largest 75 media markets in the United States for the years 1998–2003 were acquired from Nielsen Media Research (NMR). A media market or designated market area (DMA) is defined by a group of non-overlapping counties, which comprise a major metropolitan area. Exposure to advertising is estimated by using a combination of diary measurement and television set monitors to determine which programmes are being watched, and viewers are then attributed exposure to the advertising within the programmes they watch.

It is customary for the advertising industry to sum rating points for a programme over a specified time interval, usually weekly or monthly.¹⁹ These summed rating points are called gross ratings points (GRPs) for all households, and provide estimates of audience size. GRPs are often expressed in exposures where 100 GRPs are equal to an average of one exposure to anyone in the household. For example, if an advertisement were to receive 200 GRPs for a month in a given media market, this is interpreted to mean that the average household within the media market viewed that advertisement twice during the month. In this example, because ratings are averages across the population in a media market, any given household may have been exposed to the advertisement more or less than on two occasions, depending on how many hours of television are watched in the household. These measures are useful for comparing average relative exposures between advertisers, across geographic regions and over time.¹⁹

For our analyses, we used ratings data for national broadcast, national cable, national syndication and local broadcast or spot advertising, representing the majority of television shows viewed on network and cable television.

We aggregated ratings data for Philip Morris ads by campaign category to derive GRPs for each campaign type by month and media market for the period from December 1998 to December 2003. To create national level measures, we then averaged monthly GRPs across the media markets by campaign category by year. If a campaign lasted less than a year, then only the months where broadcasting was observed were averaged. We divided the average GRPs by 100 to create a measure of average advertising exposures per month.

RESULTS

Overview of campaign development

Corporate documents reveal that Philip Morris's corporate image advertising was part of a larger image building campaign called "PM 21." The purpose of the campaign was to aggressively address negative stereotypes of the company by changing public perceptions and attitudes.²⁰ In 1997 and 1998, before the launch of PM 21, Philip Morris conducted focus groups, interviews and telephone surveys to gauge the public's attitudes and opinions and the values underlying them. This research showed that the company had a highly negative image.²⁰ Negativity was driven by Philip Morris's association with tobacco issues, providing both negative intensity and emotion; and was further enhanced by the belief that Philip Morris was solely a tobacco company.²⁰

In the beginning of 1999, Philip Morris developed six messages to positively shape public opinion about the company: (1) Philip Morris is open and accessible; (2) Philip Morris is working to reduce youth smoking; (3) Philip Morris is more than a tobacco company; (4) Philip Morris and its employees contribute to the community; (5) Philip Morris plays a

significant part in the US economy providing jobs and taxes; and (6) Philip Morris is addressing sensible solutions to smoking in public places.²⁰ Philip Morris selected four markets, Columbus (OH), Denver (CO), Nashville (TN) and Portland (ME), in order to test messaging along with community engagement tactics. Such tactics included a youth smoking prevention initiative, programmes to accommodate smoking in public places, and community outreach to show the face of Philip Morris.²⁰ In these markets, quantitative surveys indicated an increase in favourability from 29% to 63%.²⁰

Opinion leaders were a key target audience for Philip Morris's corporate image messages. This group was described as adults who voted and performed civic duties such as writing, being elected officials or addressing a public meeting, or adults who were company leaders or worked for government.²⁰⁻²² Overall, the advertising buy to reach opinion leaders was planned to substantially target cable television news and political programming.²³

Internal memoranda suggest that the PM 21 strategy was promising: after attending a preview of image ads and a presentation of PM 21 in October 1999 just days before the launch of the campaign, financial analysts reported the potential gains of the campaign. Sanford C Bernstein & Co thought the corporate image campaign would "mitigate the need on the part of juries to further punish tobacco companies for past behaviour."²⁴ Further, the Bernstein analyst added that the ads would provide a "brand equity boost" to the Philip Morris family of companies.²⁴ Morgan Stanley Dean Witter believed the campaign would moderate public anger, diminish the risk of large damage awards in individual smoker claims; move Philip Morris into the mainstream of corporate America and improve the effectiveness of lobbying efforts.²⁴ Finally, Goldman Sachs thought the image campaign would neutralise the demonisation of the company and improve success in legal and regulatory areas.²⁴ Steve Parrish, senior vice president of corporate affairs, was so pleased with this feedback that he distributed the financial comments to every employee of the company.²⁵

"Working to Make a Difference"

Campaign development and content

Philip Morris developed an advertising framework to improve the favourability of the company. Stories were developed containing three messages: "making a difference," "more than a tobacco company" and "a responsible marketer and manufacturer."²⁶ In the ads, Philip Morris's role was to be portrayed as essential to each story, conveying the point that without Philip Morris's contribution there would be no hero and no story. The stories in the ads attempted to elicit a positive emotional connection between the company and the public by portraying common shared experiences and values.²⁶

To gather story ideas, heads of organisations receiving funds from Philip Morris were interviewed and stories were collected on story development forms to be used for possible advertising. Each form contained criteria for successful advertising. According to the criteria, Philip Morris must be the hero in the story; the story must have credibility and believability drivers such as duration and depth of commitment; stories should have cultural cues containing African Americans and Hispanics; and contain other considerations such as hunger, featuring the socially vulnerable such as the children or the elderly, and domestic violence.²⁷⁻²⁹

Philip Morris's first public relations television commercials were launched in October 1999, under the tagline, "Working to make a difference: the people of Philip Morris." In the ads, the corporate name is prominently featured in voiceovers and taglines. In some ads, less controversial subsidiaries like Kraft

Foods and Miller Brewing are featured. The ads emphasise Philip Morris's support for community organisations through monetary and volunteer contributions. The ads portray Philip Morris as a corporate hero, feeding the elderly, providing shelter for battered women, keeping kids from buying cigarettes, delivering water to hurricane survivors and providing food to war refugees. By prominently featuring Philip Morris and associating the company with good corporate works, the ads appear to counter the public perception of Philip Morris as an evil doer.

Campaign exposure

Table 1 summarises mean monthly exposures to the five Philip Morris advertising categories for television households across the 75 largest media markets in the United States. Three public relations campaigns, "Working to Make a Difference," "Tobacco Settlement" and "PMUSA" are presented along with two youth smoking prevention (YSP) campaigns targeted, respectively, at youths and parents.

Television advertising for the "Working to Make a Difference" campaign began in October 1999 and lasted 27 months, until December 2001, with an overall mean of 5.37 ads/month during this period. Of the three public relations campaigns, this campaign had the longest duration and the most number of commercials with 19 executions. Although Philip Morris placed advertising across all programming on national network and cable television, news programming accounted for at least 20% of the media buy over the two year period. News programming included morning and nightly news broadcasts, as well as cable news outlets such as MSNBC, CNBC, Fox News and CNN.

Advertising exposure to the "Working to Make a Difference" ads remained constant over the first 15 months of the campaign in 1999 and 2000, with the average viewer being exposed to approximately six ads per month. In 2000, Philip Morris exposed the public to more image ads than both the YSP youth and parent campaigns combined, with television households being exposed to just over five ads per month for YSP and six ads per month for the Working to Make a Difference campaign. In 2001 until the campaign ended in December, exposure averaged just under four ads per month.

"Tobacco Settlement"

Campaign development and content

The "Tobacco Settlement" media campaign outlined the terms of the 1998 MSA, which settled the lawsuit brought by 46 states against the tobacco industry. Along with financial provisions, the tobacco industry agreed to prohibitions against youth targeted tobacco marketing. The ads described restrictions the MSA placed on marketing, such as prohibition of tobacco logos on clothing, tobacco advertising on billboards and transit, the use of cartoon characters and marketing of tobacco to children. They also informed the public that the settlement included \$1.5 billion to fund antismoking advertising and education.

The American Legacy Foundation's (Legacy) national television campaign that portrayed tobacco companies as manipulative and deceptive might have contributed to Philip Morris's urgency to broadcast the tobacco settlement ads. According to Starcom Media Services, the airing of Legacy ads in February 2000 began to shift the focus of issue based campaigns. Starcom reported that although Legacy ads were primarily targeted towards teens, advertising was shifting towards an emphasis on adults and increasing in anti-industry and anti-Philip Morris messages. The California Department of Health Services and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health had also increased anti-industry messages.³⁰

Table 1 Variation in advertising exposure to Philip Morris advertising for television households based on top 75 DMAs in the United States, 1998–2003

Campaign type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1998–2003
Working to make a difference							
Monthly mean	0	6.18*	6.74	3.80	–	–	5.37
No of months	0	3	12	12	0	0	27
Total	0	18.54†	80.88	45.60	0	0	145.02
Tobacco settlement							
Monthly mean	0	0	10.05	0	0	0	10.05
No of months	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total	0	0	30.15	0	0	0	30.15
PM USA							
Monthly mean	0	0	0	0	0	3.11	3.11
No of months	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Total	0	0	0	0	0	21.77	21.77
YSP youth							
Monthly mean	7.04	4.00	3.47	2.16	1.75	0	3.27
No of months	1	12	12	12	1	0	38
Total	7.04	48	41.64	25.92	1.75	0	124.35
YSP parent							
Monthly mean	0	3.47	1.69	1.96	3.34	3.17	2.64
No of months	0	6	12	12	12	12	54
Total	0	20.82	20.28	23.52	40.08	38.04	142.74

*On average each month, households were exposed to 6.18 ads.

†Over the three-month period of the campaign in 1999, households were exposed to an average of 18.54 ads.

Initial focus group testing of the “Tobacco Settlement” ads in May 2000 provided positive results for Philip Morris by increasing perceptions of favourability towards the company, through enhancement of belief that “PM is working to change for the better,” and “PM is open and honest about their products and business practices.”³¹ Philip Morris was desperate to deliver its “tobacco has changed” message. In May 2000, Roy Marden, director, external affairs of Philip Morris Management Corp, expressed the need for Philip Morris to increase communication efforts stating, “This is particularly imperative in light of the facts that the anti’s vilification ads are back, our negative numbers are up, & the next round of PM 21 ads will not be tobacco-related.”³²

The “Tobacco Settlement” ads were launched on 17 July 2000 just three days after a verdict in the second phase of the Engle case which awarded \$145 billion to sick smokers in Florida. The campaign was scheduled only to last eight weeks with increased exposure during the Republican and Democratic conventions.³³ Over the duration of the campaign, MSA book requests averaged approximately 1429 per day. Addresses were collected from each caller who requested a booklet about the provisions of the MSA.^{34 35}

The “Tobacco Settlement” campaign consisted of only one commercial in either a 30 second or 60 second format. Compared to the “Working to Make a Difference” campaign, the “Tobacco Settlement” campaign had a very different content and tone. Both the long and short versions of the ad were minimalist, depicting a series of black sentences on a white background. As each sentence is shown, a female announcer reads it. The ads ended with the tagline, “Philip Morris USA. Things are changing. We wanted you to know” and a phone number to request a copy of the agreement.

Campaign exposure

Table 1 shows that of the three campaigns, the “Tobacco Settlement” campaign was the shortest in length, spanning mid-July until mid-September 2000. During its eight week run, the settlement campaign achieved the highest exposure of the three campaigns, with the average viewer being exposed to just over 10 ads per month. However, exposures peaked in August, during the time of both Democratic and Republican conventions, when the average viewer would have been exposed to 19

of these ads. Compared with the “Working to Make a Difference” campaign, Philip Morris placed proportionally more “Tobacco Settlement” advertising in news programming, which accounted for 39% of the media buy on national network and cable.

When monthly exposures for both the “Working to Make a Difference” and “Tobacco Settlement” campaigns are combined, television households received the highest ad exposure over the six years of the study during the month of August 2000, with just over 26 ads. When monthly ad exposures for the YSP campaigns were included, the data show that audiences were exposed to positive images of Philip Morris in the month of August 2000 at least once per day on average.

“PM USA”

Campaign development and content

As far back as 2000, a report from a Philip Morris “Strategic Issues Taskforce” recommended using the internet as a platform for communicating core tobacco issues, including addiction, causation, ingredients and secondhand smoke.² The chair of the taskforce commented that although “most users will be American, the web site will be available internationally and can have international ramifications.”¹² William Webb, Philip Morris’s chief operating officer, agreed that “a global regulatory environment” was emerging, which has “critical implications for our tobacco business.”¹² According to a 2001 memo written by APCO, a public relations company hired to review the effectiveness of the PM USA website, Philip Morris should use the internet to complement paid and earned media. Internet statements were thought to carry greater credibility than paid media because of the additional depth of information on websites. To become credible to the public, the “good corporate actor image” must be consistently reflected in the press and “packaged” in Philip Morris’s website. Advertising facts in paid media should be reinforced on the PM USA website through placement of website addresses in ads, compelling the public to visit the site.³⁶

In 2003, Philip Morris planned a major update to its philipmorrisusa.com website. The company created a search engine optimisation plan to increase traffic flow to the site and included the following topics: Philip Morris products, ingredients in cigarettes, health issues, smoking and disease,

addiction, quitting smoking, low tar cigarettes and secondhand smoke. In addition, the company explored options to change the tone of the health issue content of its webpage so that it would convey, "... a more user friendly, transparent, credible voice."³⁷

Philip Morris scheduled the website ads for its updated website to broadcast in mid June, only two months after the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was approved by 192 nations in Geneva, making real Philip Morris's forecast of a more global regulatory environment for tobacco control.³⁸ According to a report by Starcom, the PM USA ads were scheduled to begin in June 2003, targeting opinion leaders and adults over 18 years old. The campaign would deliver approximately 300 GRPs on national and local television over summer and early fall.³⁹

Philip Morris launched its web campaign in June 2003, and continued airing after the current study's monitoring period ended. As of December 2003, the campaign contained four ads introducing the PM USA website (www.philipmorrisusa.com). Similar to the "Tobacco Settlement" campaign, the ads were minimalist, depicting highlighted sections of Philip Morris's website. Three ads featured information from the health issue section of the website, acknowledging that there is no safe cigarette and stating that smoking is addictive and can cause serious health effects. In all of these ads, quitting is mentioned as the only way to reduce the health effects of smoking. Although Philip Morris acknowledged similar statements about the health effects of smoking on the company's website in 1999, these ads were the first admission of the consequences of smoking in television advertising.⁴⁰ A fourth ad directs the viewer to a resource centre encouraging parents to download a brochure on talking to kids about smoking.

To gauge the effectiveness of the campaign, APCO conducted opinion telephone surveys of US adults with over sampling of African Americans, Hispanics, residents of Florida and California and "opinion elites."⁴¹ The surveys were conducted over the length of the campaign until January 2004. These surveys measured ad awareness and reaction to the campaign, as well as public belief and attitudinal variables including corporate reputation, positive impressions, and perceived corporate responsibility, accountability, and honesty.⁴¹⁻⁴³

In a July 2003 survey report, APCO reported 81% of respondents who saw the ads had a positive impression of the ads and 55% gave Philip Morris "an 'excellent' or 'good' job rating for addressing tobacco issues."⁴³ The survey also reports that the PM USA ads were rated more positively than Legacy and other state sponsored commercials criticising the industry; and at least half the respondents thought the PM USA ads were more credible than advertising criticising the tobacco industry.⁴³ Philip Morris also gained by addressing broader tobacco issues rather than just tobacco products. APCO reported that the increased visibility of the ads led to the belief that the company reduced product marketing and created the perception of more responsible marketing practices. APCO concluded that key messages still have not saturated the public: "... 'Acknowledging Health Risks' is among the most important drivers of corporate reputation and must be addressed before other messages and initiatives can have an impact on reputation."⁴³

Campaign exposure

Table 1 shows for the six months of available 2003 data, the web campaign had the least amount of monthly exposure of the three campaigns with just over three ads per month. For advertising on national network and cable, news programming accounted for almost 60% of the media buy. In 2003, household exposure to the web campaign equalled exposure to the parent targeted YSP campaign.

DISCUSSION

In the late 1990s the tobacco industry in the United States existed in an environment where its ability to deny the negative health effects of smoking was being eroded, and legal cases were promoting a negative image of tobacco companies. We found documentary evidence that Philip Morris gave serious appraisal to the challenges being made to the public image of the company at this time and the potential accompanying loss of profits and devised a series of media campaigns—"Working to Make a Difference," "Tobacco Settlement" and "PM USA"—to rebrand the company and counter negative publicity. Further, using the actual content of each ad and media ratings data, we found that these campaigns were implemented as planned, and widely seen across the United States. Image ads played a significant part in PM 21, with the company spending more advertising dollars on image ads than Marlboro or Kraft Foods. This level of investment shows the importance Philip Morris placed on constructing a positive representation of the company for public consumption.

The findings of this study are subject to several limitations. Firstly, although Nielsen Media Research tracks national cable advertising, it does not track spot cable television where advertisers can target audiences in specific markets on cable networks. Exposures for households may therefore be underestimated. Secondly, ratings measure the average availability of an audience and do not guarantee actual viewing, nor are they measures of advertising recall. These data give estimates of relative exposure across markets and over time for different advertisers. Finally, the study was not able to weight mean GRPs by the population in each media market. Thus, although the absolute amount of GRPs might be subject to some inaccuracy, the relative amount of exposure of the population to these different advertisers is accurate.

Philip Morris's first corporate image campaign "Working to Make a Difference" was mostly focused on depicting the company as being concerned with community issues beyond tobacco, whereas the "Tobacco Settlement" and more recent "PM USA" campaigns specifically emphasised tobacco issues, like Philip Morris's youth smoking prevention campaigns.^{10 12 14} This suggests that, despite the initial PM 21 research that good corporate deeds could influence favourability ratings of the public, Philip Morris determined that the most effective messages to positively influence the public were those concerned with tobacco issues. It is notable that the PM USA campaign and the parent directed youth smoking prevention campaign are two campaigns that Philip Morris has chosen to persist with up until the time of writing.

A sensitivity to the part tobacco litigation outcomes play in corporate public image was demonstrated by the timely appearance of the "Tobacco Settlement" campaign launched immediately after the conclusion of second phase of the Engle trial. This campaign alone achieved an average exposure of 19 ads during August 2000, coincident with the timing of Republican and Democratic conventions, but when paired with Philip Morris's youth smoking prevention campaigns, a massive average exposure of more than one ad per day was achieved during the month for the company. The launch of the "PM USA" campaign appeared to be timed with the company's desire to project a global corporate position on tobacco issues, following the approval of the FCTC.

Although no documents were uncovered to imply that Philip Morris tried to influence the juries of individual trials, comments from financial analysts suggest that image advertising, in the long term, would provide juries with fewer reasons to punish the company.²⁴ It was clear from the pattern of advertising buy that opinion leaders were targeted in an effort to optimise the outcomes relating to a change of image.²⁰⁻²²

Outreach to this group is evident in the increasing percentage of news programming in media buys. Over the course of the three campaigns, news programming as a percentage of the total media buy increased from 20% in the "Working to Make a Difference" campaign to 39% in the "Tobacco Settlement" campaign and, finally, to almost 60% for the "PM USA" campaign.

Philip Morris's own message testing and the views of financial analysts, show there is scope for image campaigns to change the way the public views the company. In March 1999, before the image ads started to appear on televisions across the United States, the public were sceptical of Philip Morris, with only 23% having a favourable impression when respondents were asked their overall impression of Philip Morris.⁴⁴ Over time, this percentage gradually increased, such that by March 2000 (five months after the launch of the "Working to Make a Difference" campaign), 33% of the public had favourable impressions of the company, and by December 2000, the comparable figure was 39%.⁴⁴ Among "opinion elites," the percentage who had favourable impressions of Philip Morris increased from 24% in March 1999 to 35% in December 2000.⁴⁴ In a late 2003 survey, 41% of the public thought that Philip Morris USA behave in a somewhat or much more responsible manner compared with other tobacco companies—up from 33% in February 2002.⁴⁵ In late 2003, 58% of the public thought that the tobacco industry overall was somewhat or much more responsible than in the past, although this figure did not differ from that obtained in early 2002 (59%).⁴⁵

Despite Philip Morris's persistent attempts to gain favourability, the American public remains doubtful of the tobacco industry in general. Nationwide opinion polls continue to demonstrate the general public's mistrust of the tobacco industry. Population surveys have demonstrated that no more than 4% of the public believe the tobacco industry is generally honest and trustworthy in polls conducted in the United States in 2003, 2004 and 2005.⁴⁶ The lack of widespread support for associating a positive corporate image with the tobacco industry is consistent with the APCO report that connects corporate

reputation to a company's ability to acknowledge health risks. For all its investment towards using the media to attempt to construct a positive corporate image, Philip Morris's lack of apology for past misleading conduct, and refusal to compensate those harmed represents a major impediment to Philip Morris's image construction with the public at large as it continues to market a product that kills, and continues to lure young people into the ranks of smokers.⁴⁷

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What this paper adds

- Recent studies have examined Philip Morris's overall strategy to enhance their corporate image, but to date, there is no published research detailing the extent and reach of the company's corporate image television advertising campaigns and the specific motivations behind each of them.
- In the late 1990s the tobacco industry in the United States existed in an environment where its ability to deny the negative health effects of smoking was being eroded, and legal cases were promoting a negative image of tobacco companies. Philip Morris gave serious appraisal to the challenges being made to the public image of the company at this time—and the potential accompanying loss of profits—and devised a media campaign to rebrand the company and counter negative publicity.
- Image ads played a significant part in this campaign with the company spending more advertising dollars on image ads than Marlboro or Kraft Foods. This level of investment shows the importance Philip Morris placed on constructing a positive representation of the company for public consumption.

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ELECTRONIC PAGES.....

Tobacco Control Online: <http://tc.bmj.com>

The following electronic only article is published in conjunction with this issue of Tobacco Control.

Accommodating smoke-free policies: tobacco industry's Courtesy of Choice programme in Latin America
Ernesto M Sebríe, Stanton A Glantz

Objective: To understand the implementation and effects of the Courtesy of Choice programme designed to "accommodate" smokers as an alternative to smoke-free polices developed by Philip Morris International (PMI) and supported by RJ Reynolds (RJR) and British American Tobacco (BAT) since the mid-1990s in Latin America.

Methods: Analysis of internal tobacco industry documents, BAT "social reports", news reports and tobacco control legislation.

Results: Since the mid-1990s, PMI, BAT and RJR promoted Accommodation Programs to maintain the social acceptability of smoking. As in other parts of the world, multinational

tobacco companies partnered with third party allies from the hospitality industry in Latin America. The campaign was extended from the hospitality industry (bars, restaurants and hotels) to other venues such as workplaces and airport lounges. A local public relations agency, as well as a network of engineers and other experts in ventilation systems, was hired to promote the tobacco industry's programme. The most important outcome of these campaigns in several countries was the prevention of meaningful smoke-free policies, both in public places and in workplaces.

Conclusions: Courtesy of Choice remains an effective public relations campaign to undermine smoke-free policies in Latin America. The tobacco companies' accommodation campaign undermines the implementation of measures to protect people from second-hand smoke called for by the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, perpetuating the exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor enclosed environments.

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